

Inviting Freedom: Releasing Everyone's 'Inner Libertarian'

Has this ever happened to you? You're discussing liberty with someone, and you say something like: "The government shouldn't take care of the poor."

The response you get is: "Oh yeah? Well then who *would* take care of the poor?"

Ah, you reply, there will be more charities and job opportunities and everyone cares about the poor since everyone asks the same question and besides the government is not helping the poor now anyway and so on and so on.

And as you speak, the recipient of your wisdom asks endless skeptical questions until you end up having to prove the value of everything from the gold standard to getting rid of the minimum wage...

I've offered a way around this before, in my article '[Forget the Argument From Efficiency](#)', but I would like to offer another solution to the problem of defending liberty in the face of skepticism.

I believe that [Dispute Resolution Organizations](#) (DROs) could replace the core functions of governments, but the idea is usually countered with the accusation that DROs would just turn into mini-governments. In this case, I was asked: "But DROs would force me to carry an ID card, just like a government!"

I had all my pat answers ready, but I tried a different approach. I simply replied: "That's an excellent question! Let's try answering it this way. If *you're* a DRO and you want me as a customer, and I tell you I hate ID cards, how could you solve my problem?"

There was a pause. Gears began turning. "Well, you might not have to carry an ID card *per se* I guess... We could use fingerprints if we had to. Or retina scans. Or voice imprints."

"But what if I said that I hated all those things too? Or they were too expensive?"

"Well I don't know," my former opponent said. "I guess if you were buying something, your ID would be your credit card. Or bank card. Huh. Or I guess you'd have to register whatever you bought to get a guarantee, so..."

And I swear, he went on for five minutes, brow furrowed, teasing out all the possibilities of how DROs avoid forcing customers to carry ID cards.

And he only forgot *one* solution. And I couldn't resist...

"But tell me this," I said. "Why would DROs want to have you carry an ID card in the first place?"

"Because it would be more efficient for them I guess."

"Sure, but how could they make it more efficient for *you*?"

"Huh?"

"I mean, they want *you* to carry the ID card, right, so how are they going to get you to do it?"

The brow furrowed again. It's so *hard* for people to think 'outside the state'...

"By... *incenting* me?"

"Perhaps. How might they do that?"

The furrows deepened. "Well, like coffee shops I guess, with those 6-for-5 cards I always lose. Or that Air Miles thing. Or gas stations. Or local computer stores, where if you pay cash they knock off a few points..."

And off he was again, for another few minutes. But then he stopped short. "But what if it's not *worth* it for DROs to give me rebates for carrying an ID card?"

"Well what would *that* mean about the ID cards?"

"That... that they're not that valuable I guess."

And there it was! Instead of me being stuck in the position of defending liberty, we were exploring it together, and he was coming up with dozens of solutions.

And it was *fun*!

I left him without stating the obvious, although it wasn't easy! The obvious fact was this: *look at how much intellectual creativity energy is unleashed in the absence of State coercion!*

So the next time you're talking about liberty with a skeptic, if you've never tried it, try switching sides. You might be surprised how quickly you end up on the same team.